

trade issues in regular order and not to put American jobs on the Fast Track abroad.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HAITIAN FLAG DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride and pleasure today to rise to inform the House, on this Friday, May 18, Haitians throughout the diaspora celebrated Haitian Flag Day.

Since the creation of the Haitian flag on May 18, 1803, the day has been observed as Haitian Flag Day to Haitian Americans throughout the diaspora. This day has become a source of pride synonymous with unity and a symbol of freedom and individual liberty for Haitian people.

Later this week, I will introduce legislation to commemorate this historic and celebrative event. The 18th of May, Haitian Flag Day, is the most celebrated holiday in Haiti.

Just to put this day in context for most Americans, there are some historical facts that I would like to share with you.

When Napoleon Bonaparte envisioned a great French empire in the New World, he had hoped to use the Mississippi Valley as a food and trade center to supply the island of Hispaniola. First, he had to restore French control of Hispaniola, where Haitian slaves under Toussaint L'Ouverture had seized power. Napoleon soon realized that Hispaniola must be abandoned. Accordingly, in April of 1803, he offered to sell Louisiana to the United States.

President Thomas Jefferson had already sent James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston to Paris to negotiate the purchase of a tract of land in the lower Mississippi, or at least guarantee of free navigation of the river. Surprised and delighted by the French offer of the whole territory, they immediately negotiated the treaty.

At one stroke, the United States would double in its size, an enormous tract of land would be open to settlement, and the free navigation of the Mississippi would be assured.

Although the Constitution did not specifically empower the Federal Government to acquire new territory by treaty, Jefferson concluded that the practical benefits to the Nation far outweighed the possible violation of the Constitution. The Senate concurred with this decision and voted ratification October 20, 1803, this all precipitated by the revolution of freed slaves on the island of Haiti.

The Spanish, who had never given up a physical possession of Louisiana to the French, did so in a ceremony at New Orleans on November 30, 1803. And in a second ceremony December 20, 1803, the French turned Louisiana over to the United States.

I would like to also honor those brave Haitians who fought for American independence at the siege of Savannah, Georgia, in 1779: The Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint-Domingue, a regiment of soldiers who formed one-tenth of the allied army before Savannah in the fall of 1779. This unit was comprised of over 500 free men of color from the island of Haiti and was the largest unit of men of African descent to fight in the American revolution.

The battle of Savannah, on October 9, 1779, reminds us that significant foreign resources of men, money and material contributed to the eventual success of the cause of American independence.

The presence of the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint Domingue was made up of free men who volunteered for this expedition is startling to most people and surprising to most historians.

Men of African heritage were to be found on most battlefields of the revolution in large numbers. A subsequent unit of Haitians was part of the French and Spanish campaign against Pensacola, where they faced some of the same regiments of British troops that their comrades faced in Savannah.

Haiti, much smaller in population than the United States, was attacked by armies as large as those sent against America by Britain. The Haitian victory over the legions of Napoleon was achieved with much less foreign assistance than the United States enjoyed.

It is these types of historical events put in the context of our Nation today that we celebrate with the Haitian Americans in diaspora, their accomplishments and achievements in the growth and development of our Nation.

Many key figures in the Haitian War of Independence gained military experience and political insights through their participation in Savannah, most notably Henri Christophe, a youth at the time, but, in his adult years, a general of Haitian armies and King of his nation for 14 years.

There is little appreciation in the United States for the events that led to the formation of the Haitian nation. Influenced by both the events of the American Revolution and the rhetoric of the French Revolution, the people of Haiti began a struggle for self-government and liberty.

The first nation in the Western Hemisphere to form a government led by people of African descent, it was also the first nation to renounce slavery.

The Haitian national flag is indisputably a symbol of general pride whose origin is tightly linked to a history of struggle for freedom.

As you all already know, the Haitian flag was first presented in 1802 when Haiti was fighting against the French for independence

and it was realized that both armies fought under the same flag.

After the modification of the flag in 1807, the phrase "L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE", meaning that through unity we find strength, was adopted.

The Haitian constitution of 1987 describes the new flag as: Two (2) equal-sized horizontal bands: a blue one on top and a red one underneath; The coat of arms of the Republic shall be placed in the center on a white square; The coat of arms of the Republic will be a Palm tree surmounted by the liberty cap and under the palms a trophy with the legend: In Union there is Strength;

This weekend, I joined with hundreds of my Haitian constituents as we celebrated Haitian Flag Day together. For as long as I can remember, Haitians have gathered in my district of Brooklyn, NY to recognize this historic day.

I ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing the world's oldest black republic and the second-oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere celebrate the ideals of unity, strength and freedom embedded in the Haitian Flag by becoming a co-sponsor of the Haitian Flag Day resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ARMENIA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the people of Armenia on the May 12 Parliamentary elections. This is the first positive assessment of an election in the former Soviet Republic since it gained independence in 1991. This encouraging outcome will most certainly enhance and deepen U.S./Armenia relations, while also elevating Armenia's reputation regionally and internationally.

Over the past few months, U.S. administration officials in Washington and Yerevan have stressed the importance of these elections and explained that substantial improvement must be made. Based on public preliminary reports, Armenia has fulfilled the test set forth by the administration and received a free and fair stamp of approval.

The International Election Observation Mission issued a statement which read, in part, and I quote, "The election is assessed in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments, other international standards for democratic elections and national legislation."

I'm especially pleased that the U.S. Embassy in Armenia joined the chorus of praise with its own assessment which reads, and again I quote, "We

share the satisfaction of international observers that the election infrastructure, both legal and technical, has been greatly improved."

Mr. Speaker, I join in sharing the pride of our embassy and the contributions we have helped make in advancing the course of democracy and the rule of law in Armenia. These results are the best evidence to date that our assistance to this fledgling Republic is indeed serving its intended purpose. Our shared values and the strong bonds between the United States and Armenia will no doubt continue to expand. In doing so, we will continue to foster democracy in Armenia and work towards stability in the South Caucasus region.

Earlier this year, dozens of my colleagues joined me in sending a letter to the chairman of the House State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee calling for \$75 million in assistance for Armenia in fiscal year 2008. As the appropriation process continues, I'd like to remind my colleagues of this request and renew it again today. This assistance demonstrates our commitment to Armenia, which is a friend and a supporter of U.S. policies for peace and security in that part of the world.

Armenia's achievement also addresses concerns expressed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation with respect to these elections. Armenia has met the necessary threshold, and I'm confident that the people and the Government of Armenia will only continue to improve upon their accomplishments in achieving the standards and norms of a democratic society. And accordingly, I urge the MCC to fully fund its compact with Armenia in an expeditious manner.

These elections are an historic step towards a fully democratic Armenia, a goal to which the nation has demonstrated its commitment and leadership in the region through democratic reform. I congratulate the people of Armenia for this remarkable accomplishment.

I would also like to enter into the RECORD a letter I sent with Congressman KNOLLENBERG marking this achievement.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, May 18, 2007.

Hon. SERZH SARGSYAN,
Prime Minister, The Armenian Embassy, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT KOCHARIAN,
President, The Armenian Embassy, Washington, DC.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER SARGSYAN AND PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN: We write to congratulate you both on the success of the May 12th Parliamentary elections in Armenia. The success of this free and fair election cycle reflects the great progress made by Armenia in recent years to move further away from its Soviet past and towards a flourishing democracy.

The importance of this round of elections was well-understood and carried out honorably by your government. We appreciate Armenia's willingness to work with the U.S. government to ensure the elections were indeed free and fair. Your hard work and dedi-

cation has led to the citizens of your country following the lead of their government officials in operating in a free and democratic way to elect a new Parliament.

We look forward to our continued work with you to advance the Armenian and Armenian-American agenda in the U.S. Congress.

Sincerely,

JOE KNOLLENBERG,
FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Members of Congress.

NEW VERSION OF NAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Congress is now faced with a so-called new trade policy with regard to Peru, Panama, Colombia and South Korea. But this deal is not a new direction for trade; it's a variation of the same old theme.

We have seen how NAFTA has sucked a million good jobs out of our country and ruined millions of lives in Mexico and driven so many desperate illegal immigrants across our border. We have seen how so-called free trade with a closed and manipulative China has led to soaring deficits, increasing outsourcing of our jobs, and lax labor and environmental standards not just in Asia, but around the world in a race to the bottom. Tainted Chinese food is not just being sent here for our pets, but for our people.

The trade policy released last week does not make any major changes to this trade regimen. It does not aim at yielding a more balanced set of trade accounts for our country, or even opening the closed markets of the world. It doesn't fix agreements that aren't working to our advantage or even to be fair to both sides. There is nothing in this deal about the privatization of public works, for example, in water or in sanitation or health care that are inherent in what has been negotiated. If Democrats oppose privatizing Social Security here in the United States, why would we require privatizing the Peruvian social security system? Now, why would we do that?

This NAFTA replica presents a non-binding list of requests that has the illusion of enforceability, but sacrifices more of our middle class to global investors.

In fact, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has said it supports this rehashed agenda because of, and I quote, assurances that the labor provisions cannot be read to comply with ILO conventions.

These repackaged NAFTA agreements do not reflect a desire for a new trade model that many Members of Congress and vast majorities of the American people expect. And I am truly saddened that those who have cobbled these deals together make light of the people of our country and other countries who have been so deeply hurt by these agreements, by denying them a seat at the tables of testi-

mony in this very Congress. In fact, their methods are most undemocratic.

Last March NBC and the Wall Street Journal conducted a poll asking the American people, do you think free trade agreements between the United States and foreign countries have helped the United States, have hurt the United States or have not made much of a difference? Forty-six percent of respondents answered U.S. trade agreements have hurt this country. Only 28 responded, half as many, said they have helped.

The American people want free trade among free people, and they want a trade policy that encourages U.S. economic growth and job creation here at home.

It is irresponsible to continue to reword the same agreements and expect that our constituents are naive enough to accept it as real change.

A new trade policy must respect the dignity of work, the rule of law, the equality of sexes, the nobility of the environment and the value of the person.

We cannot continue to stand for trade policies, binding or not, that degrade the value of the working class and cost money, jobs and lives as we see in the wake of NAFTA and in all of the trade agreements that mirrored it.

Our constituents realize that our current trade policy is more harmful than helpful. And before we encourage the remaking of NAFTA for Peru, Colombia, Panama, South Korea, we need to revisit U.S. trade policy and make comprehensive changes. We cannot extend fast track until we fix what is wrong with existing agreements that yield these job hemorrhages.

I applaud those of our distinguished colleagues who are here this evening who are working very hard to change this trade model to make it thorough, to make it fair, to make it a balanced situation for the people of our country, and to treat the people of the Third World with respect.

I look forward to participating in genuinely reshaping the future of international trade to reshape jobs being created here at home and the economic policies that are so vital to the future for our people in order that they can move into the middle class again, rather than falling out. We have a long way to go.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)